

REMARKS

1. Present Status of Patent Application

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding final Office Action mailed June 25, 2008. Claims 1, 2, 5, 10, 12, 14, and 16-18 have been amended in the present response and claim 15 has been canceled. Claims 1-14 and 16-20 remain pending in the present application. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

2. Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-3 and 5-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Carolán* (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0133440 A1) in view of *Block* (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0050976 A1). Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Carolán* in view of *Block* in further view of *Nichols* (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0103203 A1).

a. Claim 1

As provided in independent claim 1, Applicant claims:

A system for managing accounts within a network community, comprising:

an account server to manage a plurality of direct accounts for a plurality of resident users of the network community and at least one guest account for at least one guest of a respective resident user;

a client of a respective resident user of the network community configured to send to a non-resident user of the network community an invitation to become the guest of the respective resident user, ***wherein the account server is configured to create a guest account for the non-resident user after the sending of the invitation and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the account server configured to:***

after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account.

(Emphasis added).

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is allowable for at least the reason that *Carolan* in view of *Block* does not disclose, teach, or suggest at least "wherein the account server is configured to create a guest account for the non-resident user after the sending of the invitation and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the account server configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account," as emphasized above.

For example, *Carolan* describes a community portal that allows a member to arrange a personal community. See para. 0043. "Thus, members are able to invite others (including non-members) to join their personal community. Invited non-members must become global community members, in order to join personal communities." See para. 0045. "Inviting someone to join one's personal community does not itself create a global community account. However, the invited person must have an account in order to join the personal community of any member." See para. 0068.

As such, *Carolan* describes that a user has to already be a member of the community portal before the user can join a personal community. Accordingly, *Carolan* fails to teach or suggest at least "wherein the account server is configured to create a guest account for the non-resident user after the sending of the invitation and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the account server configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account," as recited in claim 1.

Further, *Block* describes a website structure for providing access to information contained within various community areas. *Block* describes that a registered user may

belong to a community and invite member users or non-member users to the community. Access to various information within the community is controlled by the status of the invitee or the relationship the invitee has to other members of the community. *Block* describes that “the website might use shell accounts to hold role and security associations associated with an invited person until that invitation is accepted. When accepted, the shell account is turned into a member account for the invited person, who then becomes a registered member.” See para. 0030. It is noted that the shell account is turned into a regular member account and not a guest account in *Block*. Accordingly, *Block* does not disclose “wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the account server configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account,” as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, *Carolán* in view of *Block* fails to teach or suggest at least “wherein the account server is configured to create a guest account for the non-resident user after the sending of the invitation and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the account server configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account,” as recited in claim 1.

As a result, claim 1 is patentable over *Carolán* in view of *Block*, and the rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn.

b. Claims 2-9

For at least the reasons given above, claim 1 is allowable over the cited art of record. Since claims 2-3 and 5-9 depend from and include the features of claim 1, claims 2-3 and 5-9 are allowable as a matter of law over the cited art of record. Further, claim 4 is allowable as a matter of law over the cited art of record, since *Nichols* fails to remedy the deficiencies of the cited art and claim 4 depends from and includes the features of claim 1.

c. Claim 10

As provided in independent claim 10, Applicant claims:

A system for managing accounts within a network community, comprising:

means for sending an invitation to a non-resident user to become a guest of a resident user;

means for managing a direct account of the resident user of the network community and a guest account of the guest user of the network community, the guest account sponsored by the resident user;

means for creating the guest account after sending the invitation to the non-resident user; and

means for setting up the guest account with identification information contained in the invitation about the non-resident user, ***wherein the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the means for managing configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account.***

(Emphasis added).

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 10 is allowable for at least the reason that *Carolan* does not disclose, teach, or suggest at least “wherein the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the means for managing configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account,” as emphasized above.

For example, *Carolan* describes a community portal that allows a member to arrange a personal community. See para. 0043. “Thus, members are able to invite others (including non-members) to join their personal community. Invited non-members must become global community members, in order to join personal communities.” See

para. 0045. "Inviting someone to join one's personal community does not itself create a global community account. However, the invited person must have an account in order to join the personal community of any member." See para. 0068.

As such, *Carolán* describes that a user has to already be a member of the community portal before the user can join a personal community. Accordingly, *Carolán* fails to teach or suggest at least "wherein the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the means for managing configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account," as recited in claim 10.

Further, *Block* describes a website structure for providing access to information contained within various community areas. *Block* describes that a registered user may belong to a community and invite member users or non-member users to the community. Access to various information within the community is controlled by the status of the invitee or the relationship the invitee has to other members of the community. *Block* describes that "the website might use shell accounts to hold role and security associations associated with an invited person until that invitation is accepted. When accepted, the shell account is turned into a member account for the invited person, who then becomes a registered member." See para. 0030. It is noted that the shell account is turned into a regular member account and not a guest account in *Block*. Accordingly, *Block* does not disclose "wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the means for managing configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account," as recited in claim 10.

Therefore, *Carolán* in view of *Block* fails to teach or suggest at least "wherein the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community and wherein a respective guest account contains a data field to specify an

end-date for canceling the respective guest account, the means for managing configured to: after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account,” as recited in claim 10.

As a result, claim 10 is patentable over *Carolán* in view of *Block*, and the rejection of claim 10 should be withdrawn.

d. Claims 11-13

For at least the reasons given above, claim 10 is allowable over the cited art of record. Since claims 11-13 depend from and include the features of claim 10, claims 11-13 are allowable as a matter of law over the cited art of record.

e. Claim 14

As provided in independent claim 14, Applicant claims:

A method for managing accounts within a network community, comprising:

managing a direct account of the resident user and a guest account of a guest of the resident user;

sending an invitation to a non-resident user of the network community to become a guest of a resident user of the network community, wherein identification information about the non-resident user is provided to generate the invitation;

creating a new guest account for the non-resident user after sending the invitation to the non-resident user, ***wherein the identification information is utilized to setup the new guest account and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community;***

specifying an end-date for canceling the guest account, wherein the end-date is stored in a data field contained in the guest account; and

after occurrence of the end-date, offering the guest an opportunity to convert the guest account into a new direct account.

(Emphasis added).

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 14 is allowable for at least the reason that *Carolán* does not disclose, teach, or suggest at least “wherein the

identification information is utilized to setup the new guest account and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community, specifying an end-date for canceling the guest account, wherein the end-date is stored in a data field contained in the guest account; and after occurrence of the end-date, offering the guest an opportunity to convert the guest account into a new direct account," as emphasized above.

For example, *Carolan* describes a community portal that allows a member to arrange a personal community. See para. 0043. "Thus, members are able to invite others (including non-members) to join their personal community. Invited non-members must become global community members, in order to join personal communities." See para. 0045. "Inviting someone to join one's personal community does not itself create a global community account. However, the invited person must have an account in order to join the personal community of any member." See para. 0068.

As such, *Carolan* describes that a user has to already be a member of the community portal before the user can join a personal community. Accordingly, *Carolan* fails to teach or suggest at least "wherein the identification information is utilized to setup the new guest account and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community, specifying an end-date for canceling the guest account, wherein the end-date is stored in a data field contained in the guest account; and after occurrence of the end-date, offering the guest an opportunity to convert the guest account into a new direct account," as recited in claim 14.

Further, *Block* describes a website structure for providing access to information contained within various community areas. *Block* describes that a registered user may belong to a community and invite member users or non-member users to the community. Access to various information within the community is controlled by the status of the invitee or the relationship the invitee has to other members of the community. *Block* describes that "the website might use shell accounts to hold role and security associations associated with an invited person until that invitation is accepted. When accepted, the shell account is turned into a member account for the invited

person, who then becomes a registered member." See para. 0030. It is noted that the shell account is turned into a regular member account and not a guest account in *Block*. Accordingly, *Block* does not disclose "specifying an end-date for canceling the guest account, wherein the end-date is stored in a data field contained in the guest account; and after occurrence of the end-date, offering the guest an opportunity to convert the guest account into a new direct account," as recited in claim 14.

Therefore, *Carolán* in view of *Block* fails to teach or suggest at least "wherein the identification information is utilized to setup the new guest account and the guest account is activated in response to acceptance of the invitation by the non-resident user thereby making the non-resident user a member to the network community, specifying an end-date for canceling the guest account, wherein the end-date is stored in a data field contained in the guest account; and after occurrence of the end-date, offering the guest an opportunity to convert the guest account into a new direct account," as recited in claim 14.

As a result, claim 14 is patentable over *Carolán* in view of *Block*, and the rejection of claim 14 should be withdrawn.

f. Claims 15-20

For at least the reasons given above, claim 14 is allowable over the cited art of record. Since claims 16-20 depend from and include the features of claim 14, claims 16-20 are allowable as a matter of law over the cited art of record.

Claim 15 is canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer, and therefore, the rejection to the claims is rendered moot. Applicant takes this action merely to reduce the number of disputed issues and to facilitate early allowance and issuance of other claims in the present application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of the canceled claim in a continuing application, if Applicant so chooses, and does not intend to dedicate any of the canceled subject matter to the public.

CONCLUSION

Any other statements in the Office Action that are not explicitly addressed herein are not intended to be admitted. In addition, any and all findings of inherency are traversed as not having been shown to be necessarily present. Furthermore, any and all findings of well-known art and official notice, or statements interpreted similarly, should not be considered well known for at least the specific and particular reason that the Office Action does not include specific factual findings predicated on sound technical and scientific reasoning to support such conclusions.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. In addition, Applicant reserves the right to address any comments made in the Office Action that were not specifically addressed herein. Thus, such comments should not be deemed admitted by the Applicant. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned agent at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,



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